



ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

May 22, 2013

Produced by the Kentucky Department of Education

Learning through social media

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Parents can pick up many education-based tips and resources through Facebook, Twitter

As someone who has recently joined Twitter, I've quickly discovered the vast number of businesses, agencies and organizations out there promoting products and services.

Education groups are no exception. Kentucky, in fact, displays a wealth of education organizations sharing stories, news and resources on Facebook or Twitter.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has both [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages and an app (KDE News) that can give parents, students and educators access to all kinds of useful information.

KDE has many partners on social media sites that are more than happy to provide communications to parents, too.

For news and resources specific to your child's school or district, make sure you look for their social media pages, school and district websites, and any apps the school or district offers.

So who do you follow? Who do you like on Facebook? If you know of a useful app or helpful agency or resource that is available on a social media outlet and would like to share it, e-mail me at susan.riddell@education.ky.gov or kpi@education.ky.gov.

Also, as the school year comes to a close, please remind your teachers and administrators to promote *ParentInfo* to new and returning parents over the summer and especially at the start of the 2013-14 school year.

Any parent who doesn't receive *ParentInfo* but would like to can e-mail me, and I'll sign them up to start receiving it immediately.

- Susan Riddell, ParentInfo editor

It's never too early to plan for college and career

From ACT Parent

Making sure students are academically on target from an early grade is critical to their future success, as indicated in [Catching Up to College and Career Readiness](#). The research underscores the importance of an early start and places an emphasis on prevention over remediation.

What can you do to be sure your child is ready for college and career? A good starting point is the [ACT Get Set for College – Guide for Parents](#). Whether your student is headed to college or directly into the workforce after high school graduation, here are some tips for helping him or her prepare for the future:

- Take an active role in your child's [academic preparation](#).
- Encourage your son or daughter to take the most rigorous [courses](#) offered starting as early as possible.

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Career and technical education gets big boost in public schools

Gov. Steve Beshear recently signed House Bill 207 that unites the state's two Career and Technical Education (CTE) systems under the guidance of the Kentucky Department of Education. The goal is to create a unified, more relevant and efficient system to educate and prepare students for the world of work in a real-life setting.

"Students need an education system that provides job training and learning opportunities that will prepare them with the skills today's businesses require," Beshear said. "Recognizing the valuable role CTE plays is an essential part of building a viable, competitive workforce."

The legislation is part of a larger effort to prepare students for a wider range of career options through high-quality CTE programs. There is a statewide movement to make these programs more accessible earlier, more academically rigorous and better aligned with postsecondary requirements and employer needs.

For example, the Kentucky Board of Education has adopted a college- and career-readiness measure that includes an academic component and a technical skill component. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) offers dual credit opportunities so that high school students can earn college credit. Kentucky provides funds from the Carl D. Perkins CTE Basic Grant to encourage secondary and postsecondary institutions to develop innovative career pathways.

"Career and technical education directly connects learning and jobs for our students and provides them with engaging real-world opportunities so that they can transition to higher education or employment with ease," Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "This move is a key strategy in our efforts to ensure college and career readiness for all students."

A CTE Advisory Committee also was established to provide guidance in the design and implementation of programs that give all students the best possible opportunity for career preparation in a unified system.



Savannah Lyle poses with her winning artwork in the Doodle 4 Google contest. (Photo courtesy of Sherry Super, Pulaski County school district)

Pulaski County 7th grader is Doodle 4 Google finalist

Savannah Lyle, a 7th-grade student at Southern Middle School (Pulaski County), is among the finalists in the national Doodle 4 Google Contest. Lyle won the state contest for her entry depicting her "best day."

The national winner will be announced May 23 when the winning artwork will be posted on the Google homepage. [Click here](#) to learn more and to view artwork from other Kentucky students who won their age divisions on the state level.

Doodle 4 Google is an annual program that invites K-12 students in the United States to be creative in redesigning Google's homepage logo.

This year's theme was "My Best Day Ever..." Along with his or her artwork appearing on the Google homepage, the winner will receive a \$30,000 college scholarship and a \$50,000 technology grant for his or her school.

Next year's competition will launch in January 2014.

Question: Do you still read to your child once he or she has learned to read well enough to be labeled as an "expert reader?" A lot of teachers still do.

Here's a link to an article from [Mind/Shift](#) discussing the benefits of reading to older children.

[Why Reading Aloud to Older Children Is Valuable](#)

NCFL and Toyota announce new six-year initiative, starting with grant opportunity

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) recently announced a new six-year initiative called Toyota Family Learning.

NCFL is accepting grant applications to further family learning beyond the classroom and into homes and communities. Applications are being accepted through June 24 at www.toyotafamilylearning.org.

This year, five organizations will be awarded a three-year, \$175,000 grant, in addition to a wide range of NCFL training and communication support, learning items and materials. Grantees will engage vulnerable families in learning together and participating in family mentor and service learning activities.

Parents are asked to share this opportunity with their schools, local libraries and community-based organizations that provide services to families. All are eligible to apply.

The vision for Toyota Family Learning is to engage not only grantee families but also families across the nation to be a part of modern-day movement for families learning together.

Toyota Family Learning will draw the participation of families both online and offline, incorporating digital elements launching later this year including a website, mobile app, social media and more. The first component of this effort is the current grant opportunity for communities.

Education news in brief

- Andrea Flatt, right, of Cumberland County Middle School, won the Energy and Environment Cabinet's third annual "Capture the Earth" middle school photography contest with a close-up [photo](#) of a snail.



- Ben Swanson, a junior at Henry Clay High School (Fayette County), won the Young Environmentalist Award for his volunteer work at the Nature Conservancy's Jim Beam Nature Preserve in Jessamine and Garrard counties.
- A total of 17 Kentucky public school districts have submitted applications to the Kentucky Department of Education to become Districts of Innovation. See [news release](#) for more information.
- After conflicting reports from test vendor ACT about the ability of its technology system to handle online QualityCore end-of-course testing, the Kentucky Department of Education moved to paper and pencil tests for the remainder of this school year. See [news release](#) for more information.
- "Alien Hunters" is the 2013 Science Curiosity Investigation Summer Camp theme. The camp, hosted at Western Kentucky University's Hardin Planetarium, will be July 8-12 and is for students in grades 3-6. Participants will engage in fun, interactive investigations to stimulate curiosity and encourage cooperative discovery and problem solving. Registration is limited to 20 students and may be completed online at wku.edu/hardinplanetarium/. For more information, e-mail hardin.planetarium@wku.edu or call (270) 745-4044 during business hours.

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- Connect with your student's counselors, teachers and principal. They can offer ideas about how you can support your child's college or workforce training plans. Perhaps one of them can serve as a mentor to your child.
- Look for services in your area designed to help first-generation students go to college. Ask counselors and college admission officers about tutoring, counseling, mentoring or other kinds of support that your child may need.

One of the little-known features of the ACT is a 72-question [Interest Inventory](#) completed during registration.

When your teen receives [test scores](#), he or she also will receive valuable feedback about potential careers and possible college majors based on his or her interests. The [score report](#) also details academic areas where your teenager excels and areas where he or she needs to improve – for example, your teen may need to enroll in a more challenging mathematics or English class next term.

Use the valuable information from the ACT score report to gain insights into your student's potential, which can help you and your student make important decisions about the future.

For more information on helping your child prepare for college, check out [this resource](#).